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ABSTRACT

This report presents the preliminary findings of the District/Secondary School Study. The study had two purposes: (1) to identify ways of managing urban high schools to produce excellence, and (2) to recommend policy-relevant guidance to existing school and district administrators. The study design focused on the testing of two specific theories for managing schools: school effectiveness theory and organizational excellence theory. On the basis of preliminary results, the report tentatively concludes that schools are more amenable to management initiatives than originally thought. In addition, there are indications that the sources of managerial initiative are much more diverse and complex than the single organization implicit in the school effectiveness or managerial excellence theories, both of which tend to treat the school as the sole source of managerial control over itself. In contrast, a degree of collaboration has been found which suggests a pattern in which schools and districts "co-manage" the school in specific ways that produce desirable outcomes. (RDN)

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EXCELLENCE IN URBAN HIGH SCHOOLS:

AN EMERGING DISTRICT/SCHOOL PERSPECTIVE

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December 1984

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Robert K. Yin
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District/Secondary School Study

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PREFACE

This paper represents an interim report of findings from the District/Secondary School Study. This study, sponsored by the National Institute of Education, began in September 1983 and is due to be concluded in September 1986.

The document was prepared with support under Contract No. NIE 400-83-0060, but none of the views expressed herein are to be attributed to the National Institute of Education or its officials.

CONTENTS

PREFACE iii

Section

A. INTRODUCTION 1

Purpose of the District/Secondary School Study: Excellence for Urban High Schools 1
Pitfalls to be Avoided in Developing a Policy-Relevant Framework 2
Simplistic Organizational Concepts 3
Absence of Linkage between Organizational and Instructional Settings 3
Correlative Frameworks 6
Summary 6

B. TESTING TWO THEORIES OF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: EFFECTIVENESS THEORY AND EXCELLENCE THEORY 9

School Effectiveness Theory 9
Organizational Excellence Theory 11
Potential Relevance of Theory 11
Adaptation of Theory 15
The School as an Independent Organization 17

C. RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES 19

Within-Site Design 19
Defining School Performance 19
Defining School Operations 25
Defining Contextual Conditions 28
Summary of Within-Site Design 30
Cross-Site Design 31
Definition of "Site" 31
Intensive and Non-Intensive Sites 36

D. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS 41

School Performance Outcomes 41
School Operations 44
Implications for the Two Theories 44
District Co-Management of Schools 46
Departmental Management of Schools 47
Summary 49

REFERENCES 53

FIGURES

1. Research Paradigm Used by Center for Educational Policy and Management 5
2. Distribution of High Schools on Metropolitan Reading and Math Tests 21
3. Districts Reporting SAT Scores for 1981-1982 23
4. Potential Superintendent and Principal Roles in Co-Management of an Urban Secondary School 48
5. General Model of Student Achievement 50
6. District/School Co-Management of Urban High Schools 51

TABLES

1. Organizing for Excellence: Eight Themes and Their Illustrative Actions 13
2. Cities with 100,000 Inhabitants or More in 1980: Population, 1970 and 1980 33
3. Number and Types of Sites in District/Secondary School Study 39
4. City Locations of Selected Sites, by Region and City Size 40
5. School Performance Outcome from Site No. 1 and Site No. 2 42

A. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the **District/Secondary School Study**: Excellence for Urban High Schools

Much national attention has been showered on the problem of excellence in our public schools. Various panel reports, empirical studies, and syntheses of available research have pointed to the conditions desired in our schools, at both the elementary and secondary levels (e.g., Adler, 1982 and 1983a; Boyer, 1983; Education Commission of the States, 1983; Goodlad, 1983; Griesemer and Butler, 1983; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; National Science Board Commission, 1983; Newmann and Behar, 1982; Sizer, 1984; Sleeter, 1982; The College Board, 1983; and Twentieth Century Fund Task Force, 1983).

In spite of this wealth of information and numerous recommendations, specific guidance regarding the initiatives that might be taken by schools or school districts has not necessarily been couched in realistic terms. Many studies, for instance, conclude by recommending actions that may require: new legislation, larger school budgets than are possible, a revamped teaching profession, or homogeneous student body populations--all conditions that may go beyond the constraints of current public school systems. As a more serious shortcoming, the recommendations may be totally unsuited to the conditions of urban high schools--i.e., the types of schools that may be most in need of attention (e.g., see the debate in the November 1983 issue of the Harvard Education Review).

Because of this gap, the present authors have been undertaking a three-year study of urban high schools. This study, known as the **District/Secondary School Study**, began in 1983 and will eventually call for data to be collected from about 45 schools and their districts. Some schools will be the sites of intensive data collection and analysis, whereas other schools will only receive brief visits for data collection. Overall, the study has two major objectives:

- The identification of school management practices, whereby urban high schools can be managed to produce school excellence; and

- The identification of ways in which school district policies, as the larger context within which a school is operated, can facilitate the goals of the school.

Thus, the study is distinctive in its focus on managerial options at both the school and district levels of management--leading to a policy-relevant and not merely theoretically-based study.

The selection of these two objectives reflected one explicit choice: that the study was to focus on the school. In this sense, the study was to avoid becoming a "district" study. Becoming a district study would have meant incorporating various strands of research such as the role of the district superintendent (e.g., Cuban, 1976) or district-wide school improvement programs--deemed beyond the immediate concern of a high school study. This is because district initiatives must equally attend to elementary and special schools, and not just secondary schools, and a district study must cover broad political and economic conditions--e.g., desegregation policies and constraints--that draw attention away from the operation of any single school.

In hindsight, this choice reinforced a traditional perspective that, as our preliminary results will show, may be in need of modification. This traditional perspective tends to regard the high school as an independent organizational unit, in which district policies may be considered contextual elements. The perspective does not necessarily assume that a school operates autonomously, but does tend to overlook the notion that the school and district may collaborate as partners in carrying out the school's operations. Nevertheless, the initial design of the study followed the traditional perspective.

Pitfalls to be Avoided in Developing a Policy-Relevant Framework

Existing research provided some guidance on the major pitfalls to

be avoided in developing a policy-relevant framework for studying excellence in urban high schools. Three pitfalls were identified: avoidance of simplistic organizational concepts; absence of linkage between organizational and instructional settings; and correlative rather than causal frameworks. Each is described briefly below.

Simplistic Organizational Concepts. The dominant thinking about school effectiveness has been based on investigations of elementary schools (e.g., Edmonds and Frederiksen, 1979; Phi Delta Kappa, 1980; Madaus et al., 1980; and Eubanks and Levine, 1983). This has meant the implicit use of a simple rather than complex organizational framework, where: supervisory layers are relatively flat; complicating structures (such as academic departments) are usually nonexistent; and organizational size is small and not large. Moreover, there may be little distinction between instructional and organizational goals (Firestone and Herriott, 1982a), because the relevant school outcomes, at the elementary level, are virtually limited to concerns over cognitive skills and the furtherance of a student's education. Completely neglected are such other outcomes as the ability to obtain a job or to cope in an adult society, which are important at the secondary school level.

Research by Brookover (1981) and by Firestone and Herriott (1982a, b, and c; also see Herriott and Firestone, 1983) has provided direct evidence of the organizational differences between elementary and secondary schools, and the implications for studying them as organizations. Among other contrasts, the authors found that elementary schools were more likely to follow a rational, bureaucratic model, whereas secondary schools were likely to exhibit the characteristics of "loose-coupling" (Weick, 1976). This single example illustrates the qualitative differences that may exist between simplistic and complex organizations; our investigation of urban high schools therefore needed to develop an explicitly complex model.

Absence of Linkage between Organizational and Instructional Settings. A second pitfall is to focus solely on organizational or instructional factors, but to fail to deal with their linkage.

Learning and instructing, as processes, dominantly occur within a classroom, even though the major components of these processes (curriculum materials, teachers, and students) can be influenced by conditions external to the classroom. The processes are largely psychological and interpersonal, and the relevant concepts draw from theories of learning and of teaching--e.g., the works of Jean Piaget, B.F. Skinner, and John Dewey.

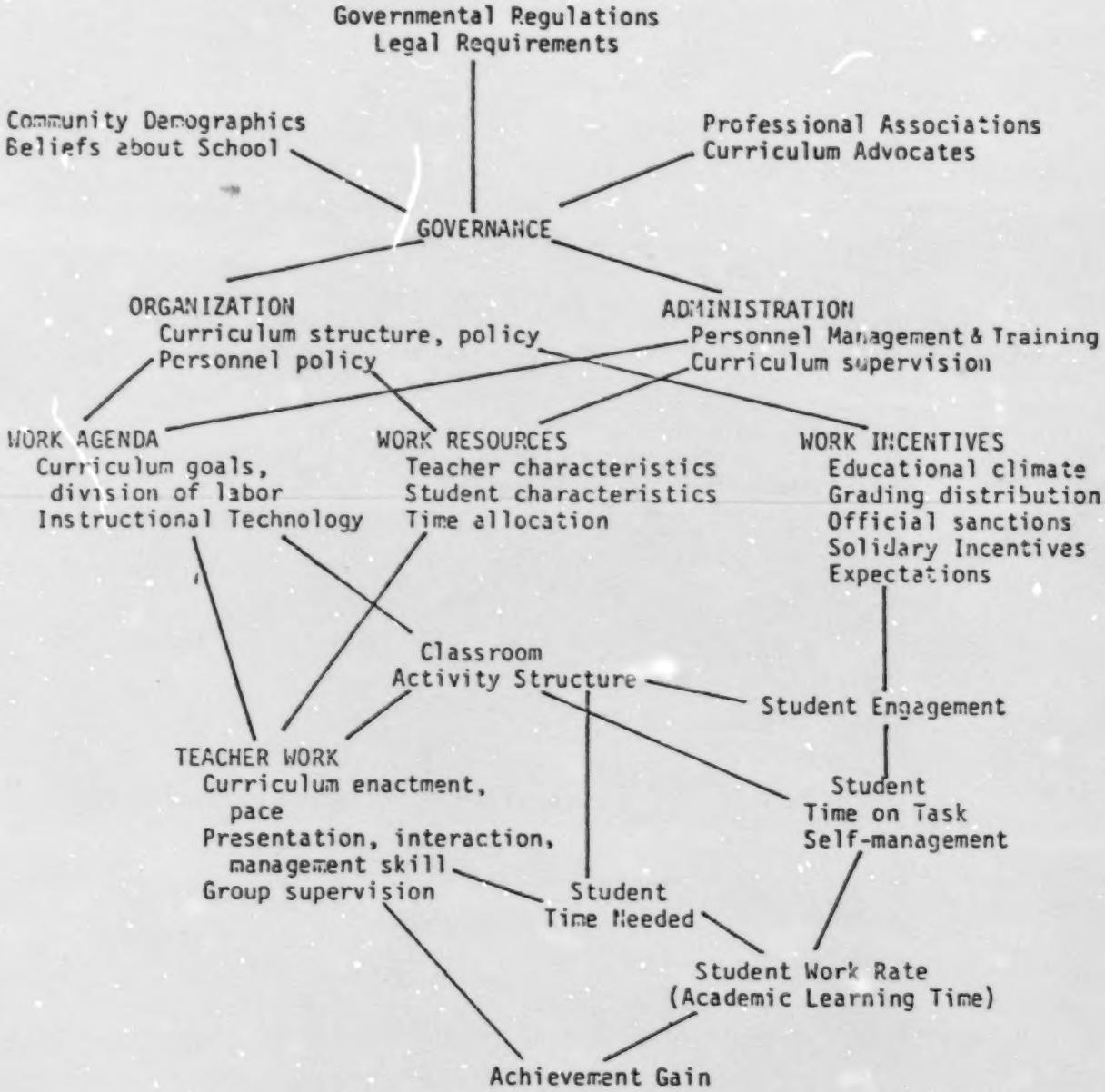
In contrast, organizing, as a process, may occur at two levels: the organizing of activities within the classroom, and the organizing of activities outside of the classroom. The first level interacts directly with teaching and instructional processes, but the second may have little to do with these processes. Moreover, the second level may be dominated by organizational rather than interpersonal factors, and draw from a different theoretical base--e.g., the works of James March, Chester Bernard, and Karl Weick.

Any investigation of school excellence must link these two processes, even though the emphasis may be on one or the other. However, the link must be carefully considered, as different units of analysis and types of data collection are relevant to each setting. One example of such a linkage is the "paradigm" used at the Center for Educational Policy and Management (Duckworth, 1980), which attempts to connect governance with organization with instruction (see Figure 1). Although such a framework is overly broad, it does illustrate the types of links that may have to be examined.

Other frameworks may overtly ignore either organizational or instructional processes, as long as the purposes are clear at the outset. Thus, for instance, Rowan's (1983) model of effectiveness in school districts largely reflects, by design, an instructional framework. By contrast, any attempt to produce new insights for district and school administrators should focus on an organizational framework, but clearly identify how instructional behavior, within such a framework, is affected by the organizational factors. In a sense, the instructional variables may therefore be considered an intermediate outcome within the context of a dominantly organizational framework,

Figure 1

RESEARCH PARADIGM USED BY
CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT



Source: Duckworth, K., Linking Educational Policy and Management with Student Achievement, Center for Educational Policy and Management (CEPM), 1980.

and this link needs to be made explicitly through data collection at the organizational and instructional levels.

Correlative Frameworks. A final pitfall to be avoided is the specification of a framework that only contains correlative, but not causal components. Such correlative conditions dominate the school effectiveness literature--e.g., see the syntheses by Cohen, 1981 and 1982; and Lohman et al., 1982. The studies are correlative because they neither inform an administrator on how the conditions might be produced nor explain the causal relationship between these conditions and the desired student outcomes. As noted by one pair of investigators (Hoover-Dempsey and Rosenholtz, 1983):

> For example, one of the most widely accepted propositions about school effectiveness is that principals make a significant difference. While the logic of this assertion is clear, the different things principals actually do to make schools effective have not usually been pinpointed by researchers.

A related problem occurs when studies do examine causal relationships, but mainly deal with the "typical" school rather than the effective school. Again, a different body of theory is usually cited--e.g., Elmore's four models of how an organization can operate (1978). Similarly, a study can focus on the "typical" principal (e.g., Morris et al., 1981), and not arrive at any insights into what makes a particular principal effective. In either situation, the causal relationships do not specifically cover those actions that might be responsible for making the organization or an individual effective (e.g., Hannaway, 1982; and Peterson, no date).

Summary

In summary, the goals of the **District/Secondary School Study** have been to identify ways of managing urban high schools to produce excellence, and thereby to recommend policy-relevant guidance to existing school and district administrators. Several pitfalls have

been identified in designing such a study, and the following section now describes the develcpment of the conceptual framework that has been used in the study.

B. TESTING TWO THEORIES OF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: EFFECTIVENESS THEORY AND EXCELLENCE THEORY

Because the goal of the **District/Secondary School Study** has been to develop policy-relevant guidelines, the design of the empirical effort focused on the testing of specific theories for managing schools. Two independent bodies of knowledge provided alternative theories that were incorporated into the data collection and analysis efforts: school effectiveness theory (e.g., Cohen, 1982; D'Amico, 1982; Edmonds, 1979; and Purkey and Smith, 1982a and 1982b) and organizational excellence theory (e.g., Peters and Waterman, 1982).

School Effectiveness Theory

As previously noted, school effectiveness theory, in its traditional form, has mainly addressed the operation of elementary schools. This has not been a conscious choice, but is the result of the fact that most of the school effectiveness studies have happened, in hindsight, to have occurred in elementary and not secondary schools. At the elementary level, a common set of findings has been that effective schools have five correlates (see Edmonds, 1979; Brookover, 1981; and the syntheses by Cohen 1981 and 1982 and by Lohman et al., 1982):

- Strong principal leadership;
- A safe school climate conducive to learning;
- An emphasis on basic skills;
- Teachers with high expectations of their students; and
- A system for monitoring and assessing student performance.

Despite the apparent disconnectedness between this traditional posing of school effectiveness theory and the objectives of the **District/-Secondary School Study**, propositions based on school effectiveness

theory were considered worth developing because the theory has in fact reflected concerns over the schooling of urban, disadvantaged students.

In addition and more importantly, investigators (as well as advocates of school effectiveness theory) have gone beyond these simplistic correlates, recognizing that they may only be correlates and that they tend to reflect the simplistic organization of the elementary school. Three developments have in particular made school effectiveness theory potentially more relevant to the problems of the urban high school. First, D'Amico (1982) called attention to the gradual integration of concerns between school effectiveness theory and the "high school reform movement," noting that common problems and strategies could exist.

Second, the U.S. Department of Education, based on work sponsored by the Charles Kettering Foundation, itemized fourteen attributes of effective high schools and used these attributes to select exemplary high schools across the country, as part of the "National Secondary School Recognition Program" (see the description by Cuban, 1984). The fourteen attributes incorporated the five traditional ones (see the first five below) as part of a longer list:

1. The principal as an instructional leader;
2. A safe, orderly school climate;
3. An emphasis on basic skills;
4. Teachers with high expectations for student achievement;
5. A system for monitoring and assessing student performance;
6. The pronouncement of clear academic goals;
7. A sense of teacher efficacy over the conduct of the school;
8. The existence of rewards and incentives for individual teachers and students;
9. The development of community support for the school;

10. Concentration on academic learning time;

11. Emphasis on frequent and monitored homework;

12. A coordinated curriculum;

13. The use of a variety of teaching strategies; and

14. Opportunities for student responsibilities in school affairs.

Third, a causal and policy-relevant framework emerged in the hands of Purkey and Smith (1982), who articulated a three-stage sequence in which:

a. specific school operations (such as those listed above) could be seen to result in changes in

b. a global school culture, which in turn affected

c. scholastic performance.

The three-stage sequence was then used to suggest strategies for federal policies, to be directed at assisting schools with large numbers of disadvantaged students.

Given these developments, the **District/Secondary School Study** adopted the longer list of fourteen correlates, to determine how these correlates produced school effectiveness. The approach was not one of testing conditions singly, but of searching for the entire pattern of conditions--especially the first five--if school effectiveness theory was to be considered a satisfactory explanation of how best to operate an urban high school to produce excellence.

Organizational Excellence Theory

Potential Relevance of Theory. An entirely independent body of knowledge was represented by the interest in organizational excellence, as depicted mainly in large businesses (Peters and Waterman, 1982). Although this second theory was originally developed to explain exemplary outcomes in private industry, the theory has drawn exceptional

interest among educators, and therefore deserved explicit attention in the **District/Secondary School Study.**

The business theory identified eight major themes for organizing a firm to produce excellence, with excellence being defined as sustained growth and income, in a given industry, over a twenty-year period of time (see Table 1). At a global level, these eight themes may not appear directly relevant to educational organizations. However, several educators have recently written about the specific parallels between these eight themes and relevant counterparts in schools (e.g., see the whole issue of Educational Leadership, February 1984). One educator, for instance, has noted that "...effective schools and excellent corporations may have more in common than many educators may believe" (Spady, 1983). Moreover, In Search of Excellence describes specific organizational actions within each theme, and closer examination reveals that some of these actions are in fact highly similar to those emerging in studies of school excellence.

For example, Lipsitz (no date) did case studies of four successful schools. Although each school followed a distinctive model, tuned specifically to its own situation and needs (itself a finding), several organizational strategies did appear repeatedly. One was that teachers had more control over their schedules in these schools than in typical schools, that they had common planning periods, and that these conditions bred an ethos of experimentation over new practices. Remarkably, all of these conditions are prominent under various themes in In Search of Excellence. More precisely, for example, the ethos for experimentation is specifically cited as an important organizational action under the theme of "having a bias for action."

As additional parallels, case studies of schools by Grant (1982) and Lightfoot (1983) have mentioned other mimicking characteristics. For instance, Grant's observation about the need to reconstitute schools into smaller units with fewer bureaucratic layers directly reflects the theme of "maintaining simple form, lean staff." Similarly, Lightfoot observed the existence of teacher autonomy of expression, opportunities for organizational participation, and treatment as

Table 1

Organizing for Excellence:
Eight Themes and their Illustrative Actions
(Peters and Waterman, 1982)

A. HAVING A BIAS FOR ACTION

1. Get out of the office
2. Use small groups, for short periods of time, to produce changes (and not voluminous reports)
3. Foster experimentation, rather than extensive market research or planning
4. Foster experimentation in conjunction with lead users
5. De-emphasize paperwork; emphasize one-page memorandum

B. BEING CLOSE TO THE CUSTOMER

1. Assess customer satisfaction frequently (e.g, once a month in a large firm)
2. Discuss and confront client dissatisfaction quickly
3. Define firm as a service business, regardless of actual industry
4. Demonstrate obsession over quality of service to customer
5. Define success in terms of quality, with growth secondary
6. Blame everyone for quality failures; reward individuals for quality successes
7. Define customer service as more important than either technological advance or cost consciousness

C. MAINTAINING AUTONOMY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

1. Distinguish between creativity and innovation; support innovators; support innovators and pioneers
2. Focus on products, projects, and customers, not technical disciplines
3. Create new divisions in the organization rather than allowing existing ones to grow large
4. Foster an intense and wide variety of communication among employees (creates a competitive marketplace among employees)
5. Tolerate failure

D. SUSTAINING PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH PEOPLE

1. Treat people (employees) as adults; as partners; with dignity
2. View employees as an extended family

3. Use labels that reflect above (e.g., "associate," "crew member," and "cast member," rather than "employee" or "worker")

E. BEING HANDS-ON, VALUE-DRIVEN

1. Have clear values and goals for the organization; most relevant values are qualitative ones, and inspire people at the very bottom of the organization
2. Maintain contact with the real working level of the organization

F. STICKING TO THE KNITTING

1. Keep organization close to the central skill, avoiding great diversification
2. Generate internal and home-grown growth, rather than growth through acquisition
3. Keep any acquisitions and diversifications on a small and experimental scale

G. CREATING SIMPLE FORM, LEAN STAFF

1. Avoid the matrix organization
2. Create divisions that are simple and functional--e.g., according to product
3. Have fewer administrators, more operators; even for large firms there is seldom a need for over 100 persons in the corporate headquarters
4. Maintain a flat organization
5. Keep scale small (small is beautiful)

H. HAVING SIMULTANEOUS LOOSE-TIGHT PROPERTIES

1. Give plenty of rope, but be a stern disciplinarian
2. Have flexible organizational structures, but rigidly shared values dealing with quality, service, innovation, and experimentation
3. Promote autonomy as a product of discipline
4. Balance short- and long-term planning
5. Stay simplistic and simple-minded in spite of the need to specialize

professionals in her cases of "good" high schools--conditions reflecting the two themes of "maintaining autonomy and entrepreneurship" and "sustaining productivity through people."

Overall, the notions in In Search of Excellence: a) provided a comprehensive perspective on how to organize for excellence; b) applied to complex organizations; c) offered specific, action-oriented processes and not just descriptive correlates; and d) were based on empirical evidence from a large number of organizations, though in a different sector. Thus, the propositions drawing from this body of knowledge also were worth incorporating into the **District/Secondary School Study.**

Adaptation of Theory. The adaptation from excellence in business firms to excellence in school organizations was accomplished in the following manner (see Spady, 1983, for an alternative adaptation, directed at schools in general and not just urban high schools). To begin with, any framework for studying potential organizational actions for schools must contain a basic set of five components of schools:

- Students;
- Teaching Staff;
- Curriculum;
- Administrative Leadership; and
- School Organization and Management.

For each of these five components, the eight themes in Table 1 do indeed translate agreeably to a school organization, and not just the business firm. Thus, for example, an initial matching between components and themes, and the organizational actions listed under them on Table 1, might be as follows (letters after each theme refer to Table 1):

- Students: Being Close to the Customer (Theme B)

- Teaching Staff: Maintaining Autonomy and Entrepreneurship (Theme C); and Sustaining Productivity through People (Theme D)

- Curriculum: Sticking to the Knitting (Theme F)

- Administrative Leadership: Being Hands-On, Value-Driven (Theme E)

- School Organization and Management: Creating a Simple Form, Lean Staff (Theme G)

Of the two remaining themes (see A and H, Table 1), the organizational actions appear to be directed at different school components, with the theme of "having a bias for action" containing actions both for administrative leadership (A1, A2, and A5) and for the teaching staff (A3, A4); and with the theme of "having simultaneous loose-tight properties" containing actions both for administrative leadership (H1 and H5) and for school organization and management (H2, H3, and H4).

With this crosswalk, all of the eight themes and their related organizational actions can be associated with one of the five basic school components. To test the parallel between business and educational organizations, these associations were then further converted into specific concepts and measures of activities in school organizations.

Again, the eight themes of excellence theory, just like the fourteen correlates of school effectiveness theory, were not considered single conditions. Instead, the appropriate testing of excellence theory requires the corroboration of all eight themes. (This also follows from Peters and Waterman's own stipulation that the excellent organization should exhibit all of the themes.) To this extent, the entire group of eight themes represents a single pattern, and any attempt to test this "model" demands a replication of the entire pattern. To the extent that deviations occur, a different model of excellence would have to be developed.

The School as an Independent Organization

Although both theories stipulate somewhat different conditions for producing effective or excellent organizations, both share one common perspective that deserves further discussion--both theories assume the relevant organization to be an independent one.

In other words, neither theory ascribes much of a role to any overhead organizations within which the subject organization may be embedded. For school effectiveness theory, only passing consideration is given to the fact that the school in question may be part of a district. In general, school autonomy is in fact the preferred posture for the effective school, with the hope being that a district can simply play a "supportive" role (e.g., see Purkey and Smith, 1982).

For organizational excellence theory, the same elements are missing, even in the business sense. No mention is made of the board of directors of a corporation or even of the shareholders. Instead, the chief executive officer (CEO) is assumed to be an autonomous agent, operating independently of any external constraints other than those possibly posed by clients.

This missing element, in both theories, was not sufficiently appreciated in the initial design of the **District/Secondary School Study**. Even though the study was explicitly intended to address both "district" and "school" practices, the investigators believed they would identify school-based operations that produced effectiveness or excellence, and that they would then infer the appropriate district posture as part of the supportive context for the school's operations (a contextual perspective). At the time, the major concern was to avoid converting the study into a "district" study (a district perspective), as previously noted, and so most of the literature on district management (e.g., see Cuban, 1984) was ignored. In hindsight, the decision to avoid the district perspective was a correct one. However, none of the investigators anticipated the incorrectness of the contextual perspective and the eventual need for yet a third approach, to be described later, that might be considered a perspective in which the school and the district "co-manage" the school.

C. RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The research design for the **District/Secondary School Study** called for a description of the data to be collected within a site as well as a site selection plan. These two considerations may be thought of as covering within-site and cross-site issues, and each is the topic of the present section of this paper.

Within-Site Design

The within-site design covered the outcomes of school performance (dependent variables) and the school operations hypothesized to lead to such performance (independent variables). In general, the dependent variables reflected the appropriate definition of an excellent (or effective) urban high school, and the independent variables reflected the characteristics of school operations contained in the two theories--school effectiveness theory and organizational excellence theory--described earlier. In addition, a set of contextual variables, covering conditions external to the school, also were defined.

Defining School Performance. The pertinent performance outcomes had to be specific to school organizations. In addition to the identification of outcome measures, the threshold or criterion level required for judging a school to be excellent or effective also was needed.

As a starting point, Rutter (1983) had recently produced a comprehensive list of relevant school outcomes, based on an extensive review of the literature. He first discussed the need to distinguish school outcomes (or effects) from student outcomes (or effects). For example, in operating an effective school, a relevant outcome might be to boost the attendance rate of students or the participation rate of parents. These are pre-eminent examples of school (organizational) rather than student (individual) outcomes. Thus, in defining the appropriate measures of school effectiveness or excellence, an important goal was to identify these and other types of organizational outcomes, some of which can be aggregates of individual scores but

others of which--e.g., a school's "reputation"--are not always the aggregate of individual scores.

Rutter enumerated seven relevant categories of outcomes for secondary schools, and these were incorporated into the **District/-Secondary School Study**:

- Scholastic attainment;
- Classroom behavior;
- Absenteeism;
- Attitudes toward learning (e.g., learning to learn);
- Continuation in education;
- Employment; and
- Social functioning.

To the extent that data collection could cover all of these categories, this definition of school performance also fulfilled the need for having multiple outcome measures (e.g., see Kean, 1982; and Rutter, 1983).

As a second step, the threshold or criterion levels of performance had to be identified for each variable. The selection of such levels encompasses both conceptual as well as measurement problems (e.g., see Kean, 1982, for a discussion).

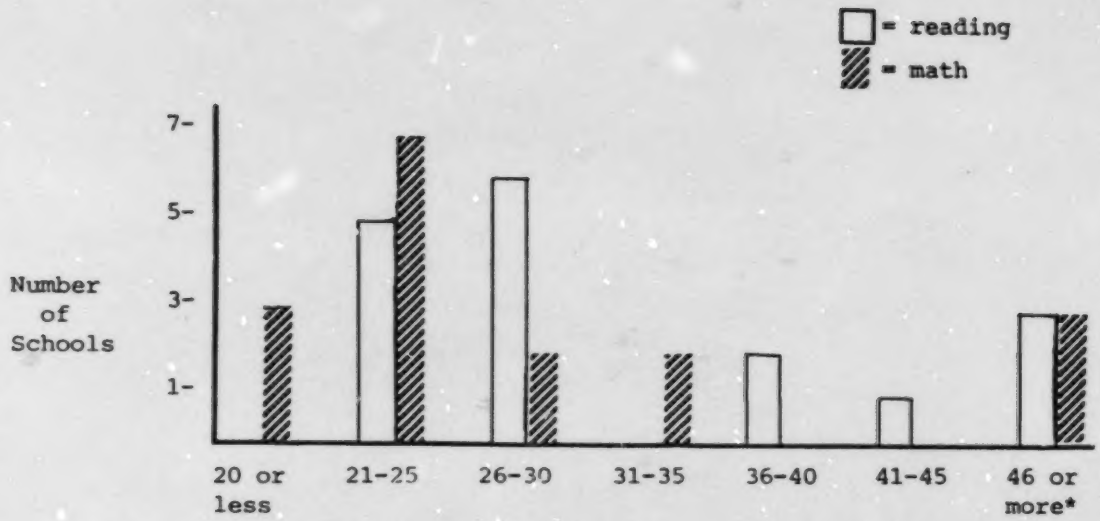
Conceptually, regardless of the outcome measure being used, one choice is to identify some absolute level that must be achieved in order to define a school as excellent. An alternative choice, however, is to define the appropriate level in relative terms, similar to the way in which Peters and Waterman (1982) based their judgments of firms--i.e., relative to other firms in the same industry. Such relative scores would mean that a school had displayed exemplary performance among the same schools of its type, and this would be well suited to any study of urban high schools.

For instance, Figure 2 shows the performance scores for Boston's

Figure 2

DISTRIBUTION OF HIGH SCHOOLS ON
METROPOLITAN READING AND MATH TESTS

(Boston)



*All three schools, in each case, are examination schools: Boston Latin, Latin Academy, and Boston Tech.

high schools on the Metropolitan Reading and Math Tests. Only three schools achieved scores higher than the national median, and all were schools with admissions requirements. Thus, if one wanted to focus on schools without admissions requirements (as will be described under the cross-site section of this paper), any reasonable but absolute criterion for performance would lead to the omission of all of Boston's schools. However, if the selection was based on relative levels of performance, the best high school without an admissions requirement would still be of interest. Although Figure 2 only shows the distribution for one city, related evidence suggested a similar problem across the country. For instance, for SAT scores, urban school districts tend to perform more poorly, in any absolute sense, than their suburban or rural counterparts (see Figure 3). This type of observation further reinforced the decision that relative measures would be more appropriate than absolute ones.

With regard to measurement, one further challenge was to avoid defining school outcomes that are in fact limited to specific classes or cohorts of students within the school, but not the school as a whole. From this standpoint, two analysts (Ralph and Fennesey, 1983) have suggested that, at a minimum, an effective school should meet three criteria regarding both the intensity and extent of exemplary performance:

- High achievement for more than a single grade;
- Persistence of such achievement over time (e.g., at least two groups of students over two testing cycles); and
- Widespread achievement throughout the school as a whole, and not just in a few exemplary classrooms.

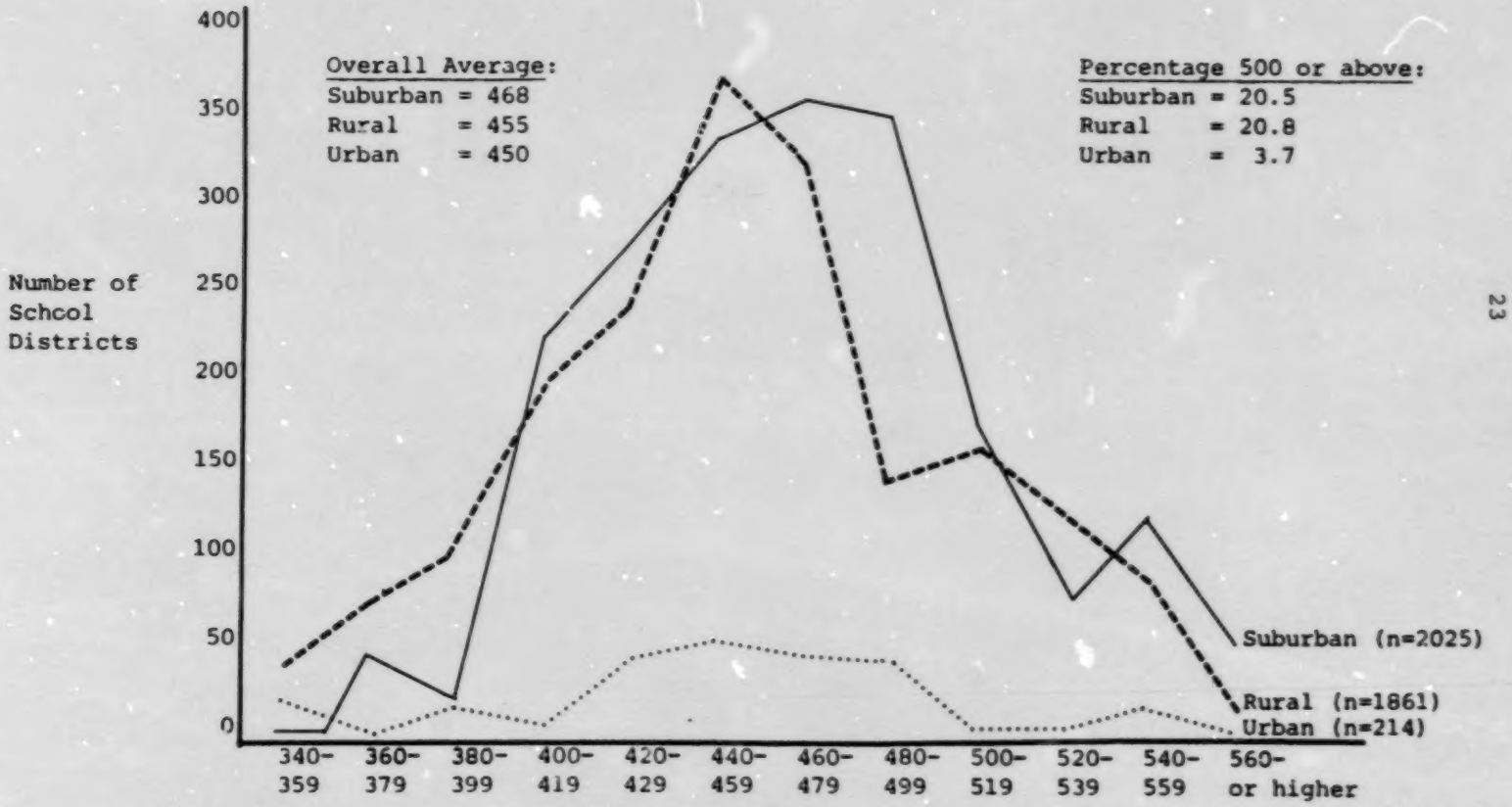
These criteria were therefore incorporated into the definition of successful outcomes in the **District/Secondary School Study.**

Purposely excluded by this approach were those schools that might have been showing rapid change (or improvement) for the outcome

Figure 3

DISTRICTS REPORTING SAT SCORES
FOR 1981-1982

(Nationwide)*



*Source: NCES

measures, but that had not yet achieved the minimal levels of excellence. In this sense, the **District/Secondary School Study** was oriented toward school excellence, and not necessarily school improvement (e.g., Lehming and Kane, 1981). Such a distinction has not necessarily been rigorously followed in previous research or by national school recognition programs.

The final definition of the dependent variables thus involved three characteristics. First, the variables covered Rutter's major variables, with eight measures being incorporated into the **District/Secondary School Study**:

- Scholastic attainment: 1) academic test performance;
- Classroom behavior: 2) suspensions/expulsions;
- Absenteeism: 3) attendance;
- Attitudes toward learning: 4) dropout rate, and 5) retention rate;
- Continuation in education: 6) postsecondary placement;
- Employment: 7) vocational enrollment; and
- Social functioning: 8) minimum competency performance.

The matches between Rutter's variables and the actual data to be collected were not always as close as optimally desired. However, a less-than-perfect match was preferred if existing data were deemed available. As the most obvious example, data on student employment following high school simply do not exist on a routine basis. Rather than leaving this variable uncovered, the data collection called for the use of the enrollment in vocational programs as a potential indicator of likely student employment.

Second, a criterion level was set for each of these eight measures, so that an urban high school was considered effective or excellent to the extent that these criterion levels were attained. In

general, the criterion levels reflected the known relative distribution of urban high schools on the various measures, with the criterion levels established so that the effective or excellent high school scored in the upper quartile or decile of the entire pool. The criterion levels were as follows:

1. Academic test performance: top 25 percent, with exact scores varying according to the type of test and the type of scoring used;
2. Suspensions/expulsions: 5 percent or below;
3. Attendance: 90 percent or higher;
4. Dropout rate: 10 percent or below;
5. Retention rate: of the students entering the 9th grade, 75 percent or more graduate;
6. Postsecondary placement: 60 percent of students enter two-year colleges, four-year colleges, or vocational-technical schools;
7. Vocational enrollment: 40 percent enrollment or higher; and
8. Minimum competency performance: 90 percent or more students pass a minimum competency test each year.

Third, the data for each variable were collected for a three-year period, with the stipulation that the truly effective or excellent school would demonstrate sustained exemplary performance--i.e., meeting the criterion levels set--for each of the three years.

Defining School Operations. The definition of the independent variables began with two lists: the fourteen attributes from school effectiveness theory and the eight themes from organizational excellence theory. Each list was converted into a set of measures addressing two concerns: 1) the existence of the predicted operation, and 2) the determination of how the operation appeared to causally produce the desirable performance outcomes. Only with the satisfaction of both conditions could the **District/Secondary School Study** go

beyond a merely correlative design.

The fourteen attributes from school effectiveness theory were easily incorporated into the study's instrument, because the attributes already were defined in terms of school operations. In the case of the organizational excellence themes, however, some adaptation was needed because these themes were originally framed in terms of business, and not school organizations. For each theme, the ideas from In Search of Excellence were therefore converted into school-based propositions. A few examples of this conversion are described below.

To take a simple example first, some actions listed under "being close to the customer" call for the frequent assessment of customer satisfaction and the early confrontation of undesirable results (see items B1 and B2, Table 1). In the words of Peters and Waterman (1982, p. 162), "... regional and branch people are brought in monthly to discuss account losses. In addition, the president, chairman, and senior officers all receive daily reports of lost accounts." In a school organization, several analogous procedures seem to be relevant and were made the topic of investigation--e.g.:

- The frequency and nature of student testing, and the ways in which test information is used;
- The readiness of school administrators and staff to deal with student (and parent) complaints, and the ways in which this information is used;
- Attendance by students in different classroom and extracurricular activities, and participation by parents in school activities--and the degree to which such "participation rates" are used by the school as a type of feedback about "customer" satisfaction.

Again, an important observation is that the items are not merely correlative; they begin to specify causal directions and rationales in a manner going beyond the typical "frequency of student testing" variable commonly found in the traditional school effectiveness literature.

A more complicated example covers the three themes of "maintaining simple form, lean staff," "having a bias for action," and "having simultaneous loose-tight properties." The entire first theme, two actions from the second (A2 and A5), and three actions from the third (H2, H3, and H4) were presumed to be relevant to the school organization and management component. Thus, several illustrative kinds of school activities might be considered as part of a framework for studying school excellence:

- Maintenance of a small staff devoted exclusively to administrative responsibilities, with most of the personnel resources devoted to educational "operations" (e.g., teaching, counseling, supervision of extracurricular activities);
- Minimal interference by bureaucratic procedures on educational operations;
- Flexible use of ad hoc, short-lived committees to produce changes and, possibly, to compensate for the small size of the administrative staff;
- Development of simple, flat organizational structures, with no competing (matrix) elements in the structure (e.g., academic departments cross-cutting against grade-level structures); and
- Flexibility of structuring, allowing for continual changes, if necessary, but with the various structures still reflecting a singular set of shared values about the school's goals.

Thus, these items also became part of the protocol for collecting data from a school site.

A final matter in defining school operations was the issue of examining teaching practices in classrooms. Regardless of whether propositions from effectiveness or excellence theory were being tested, an important part of the data collection protocol was aimed at determining the effects of organizational policies and procedures within the classroom. This perspective was included to test whether classroom practices might be largely unaffected by any organizational

actions, whether emanating from the school or district level. To the extent that this is true, the appropriate interventions for attaining effective or excellent schools would be at the teaching and classroom levels, with organizational actions having little real significance.

In other words, because of the critical nature of the organizational-instructional linkage, the **District/Secondary School Study** needed to attempt explicitly to observe classroom behavior and to link this behavior to any relevant district or school policies. Note, however, that the study was not a traditional classroom study, in that the study was limited to this implementation perspective and was not trying to identify all the classroom factors that might have been relevant in affecting student performance.

Defining Contextual Conditions. A third set of variables covered those conditions external to the school organization--e.g., ones emanating from district policies or community conditions. The district policies, of course, were of direct concern to the **District/Secondary School Study.** The relevant items were limited to two categories:

1. Those policies and procedures that appear to affect the school operations; and

2. Those policies that appear to affect the outcomes of school performance directly, without necessarily affecting school operations.

Examples of the first category were district policies or procedures that might expand or limit the range of a school's options for "being close to the customer," or "sticking to the knitting," etc. Thus, data collection about a school's testing program would be enhanced by inquiries about district policies and procedures regarding testing programs, to determine how the school's policies and procedures had been affected by these external initiatives. An example of the second category would be where the district had redefined a school's boundaries. If the composition of the resulting student population changed, district policies and procedures might have directly affected school outcomes. Thus, this second category was conceptually important

and also was included in the final data collection protocol.

Regardless of which of these two categories is involved, a major proposition at the outset of the **District/Secondary School Study** had to do with school autonomy. The proposition, drawing equally from school effectiveness and organizational excellence theories, was that:

- Excellent urban high schools may very well be those where district policies and procedures are minimal or rarely enforced.

The protocol therefore included items to determine whether school autonomy had led to positive school outcomes.

Community conditions also serve as an important context for school policies and procedures, mainly by imposing certain client characteristics--both of students and of parents. These conditions were not directly relevant to the objectives of the **District/Secondary School Study**, but nevertheless had to be incorporated as part of the contextual framework.

For instance, high student turnover rates may be considered to be an important characteristic imposed on a school by a community, if the residential population itself has a high turnover rate (e.g., see Rutter, 1983, for a review of the relevant findings). In addition, high rates clearly present such different challenges for schools that any generalization from this situation to one with a stable residential population may not be valid. As another example, many urban communities across the country are experiencing large intakes of non-English-speaking minorities. Any attempt to generalize about school excellence under these community conditions to ones with high proportions of black (but native-English) residents also might not be valid.

The contextual conditions for studying urban high school excellence therefore also considered the differences among five types of urban communities, contrasting residential turnover rates, race, and language:

1. Stable, minority (black, native English-speaking) dominated communities;

2. Stable, minority (non-native English-speaking) dominated communities;

3. Stable, majority (white, native-English-speaking) dominated communities;

4. High-turnover communities, mainly limited to changes in minority (black, native English-speaking) residents; and

5. High-turnover communities, with influx of minority (non-native English-speaking) residents.

This typology was admittedly crude, relative to current research on neighborhood conditions (e.g., Yin, 1982). First, it ignored other conditions--especially socioeconomic levels, housing stock, urban service levels, and the functional specialization of the community within the larger urban setting. Second, the typology did not attempt to deal with any of the inevitable interactions among the several high-turnover conditions--e.g., differentiating between the situation in which a non-native English-speaking population is displacing another such population vs. that in which it is displacing a black (English-speaking) population. Third, the typology did not attempt to differentiate among different rates of residential turnover. Nevertheless, as a starting point, the typology was useful in determining whether school policies and procedures had some similarity within the same community type, but reflected some qualitatively different characteristics between community types.

Summary of Within-Site Design. The within-site design covered three types of variables for which data were to be collected: school performance, school operations, and contextual conditions. For these types of variables, data were to be collected from at least four levels of analysis: classroom observations (to determine the extent to which organizational policies actually had any effect on classroom and teaching practices), school practices, district policies, and community

conditions.

All of these variables were represented in the instruments subsequently developed for the **District/Secondary School Study.** Two different kinds of instruments were used. The first kind was a case study protocol, designed for those sites in which intensive data collection was to occur (intensive sites). The second kind was an interview protocol, designed for those sites in which less intensive data collection was to occur (nonintensive sites). The distinction between these two types of sites and the criteria for their selection are described next.

Cross-Site Design

Definition of "Site". Because the goal of the study was to determine how urban high schools can excel, the basic unit of analysis was the secondary or high school, defined as:

- A school in which students graduate from the twelfth grade, regardless of the starting grade of the school.

Such schools had to be comprehensive in scope (e.g., not vocational schools). In addition, to assure that the results of the study could address the needs of the common urban high school in the U.S. today, three other criteria were used for defining eligible sites: a) the school could not have any admissions requirements based on special tests, b) the school had to have a minority enrollment of at least 30 percent, and c) the school had to have a low-income enrollment of at least 30 percent. These criteria were purposely selected to direct the **District/Secondary School Study** to the needs of the public education of urban, disadvantaged students.

To qualify as urban schools, the schools had to be part of school districts located in:

- Urban areas of 100,000 persons or more, with densities of at least 1,000 persons per square mile.

This definition of eligible urban areas happened to match a specific set of cities enumerated in the 1980 census, and these cities are shown in Table 2 (a few cities failed to meet the density criterion, and these have been crossed out.) The table therefore enumerates 166 urban locations that were used as the universe for study.

A relevant pool of urban high schools--providing suitable proxies concerning the characteristics of the universe of relevant schools--was the entire set of schools that had been eligible, originally, to participate in the Ford Foundation's City High School Recognition Program. In this program, eligible schools were defined as: a) having a comprehensive and general academic curriculum, b) being located in the central city of one of the SMSAs of the country, c) serving at least 30 percent disadvantaged and minority students, and d) having no exam-based entrance requirements. Based on these criteria, 296 schools submitted self-nominations, and all of these schools were asked to submit further information about themselves as well as to be the subjects of site visits. The aggregate characteristics of this entire pool of nominees provided an excellent source of information about the universe of sites of interest to the **District/Secondary School Study**, against which any candidate site could be judged in relativistic terms. In other words, sites to be nominated did not have to be part of the original Ford pool; but the characteristics of the pool were used as an aggregate context against which to assess the eligibility of a specific site.

A final set of criteria for defining eligible sites had to do with regional and community characteristics. The final pool of sites to be included in the **District/Secondary School Study** had to cover five regions of the country: Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Southwest, and West. The use of such strata helped to reinforce the national orientation of the study.

The community characteristics were related to the contextual conditions described earlier--to assure some distribution among the five types of communities previously listed (stable black; stable non-

Table 2

CITIES WITH 100,000 INHABITANTS OR MORE IN 1980: POPULATION, 1970 AND 1980

CITY	POPULATION									
	1970		1980							
						Percent—				
	Total [1] (1,000)	Percent Black [2]	Total (1,000)	Rank	Percent change, 1970–1980	Black	Spanish origin [3]	Under 18 years old	65 years old and over	Per square mile
Akron, Ohio	275	17.5	237	59	-13.9	22.2	.6	26.4	13.5	4,125
Albany, N.Y.	116	12.2	102	164	-12.1	16.1	1.6	20.5	16.5	4,710
Albuquerque, N. Mex.	245	2.2	332	44	35.7	2.5	33.8	27.8	9.4	3,485
Alexandria, Va.	111	14.1	103	160	-7.0	22.3	3.9	18.3	9.2	6,857
Allentown, Pa.	110	1.8	104	155	-5.6	3.1	5.1	22.4	16.1	5,929
Amarillo, Tex.	127	5.3	149	107	17.5	5.5	8.2	29.0	10.1	1,863
Anaheim, Calif.	166	(z)	219	63	31.8	1.2	17.2	26.5	7.7	5,259
Anchorage, Alaska [4]	48	3.9	174	78	262.6	3.3	3.0	31.3	3.0	104
Ann Arbor, Mich.	100	6.7	108	148	7.9	9.3	2.1	19.1	5.9	4,389
Arlington, Tex.	90	.8	160	84	77.5	2.9	4.1	29.5	4.5	2,024
Atlanta, Ga.	495	51.3	425	29	-14.1	66.6	1.4	26.8	11.5	3,244
Aurora, Colo.	75	1.2	158	96	111.5	6.9	9.0	29.5	4.3	2,657
Austin, Tex.	254	11.8	345	42	36.3	12.2	18.7	24.5	7.5	2,978
Bakersfield, Calif.	70	13.3	106	152	51.9	10.6	15.0	29.1	9.2	1,435
Baltimore, Md.	905	46.4	787	10	-13.1	54.8	1.0	26.9	12.8	9,783
Baton Rouge, La.	166	27.8	219	62	32.2	36.5	1.8	27.3	8.7	3,542
Beaumont, Tex.	118	30.7	118	132	.5	36.6	3.5	26.3	11.4	1,620
Berkeley, Calif.	114	23.5	103	156	-9.4	20.1	5.1	15.4	10.8	9,456
Birmingham, Ala.	301	42.0	284	50	-5.5	55.6	.8	26.6	13.9	2,887
Boise City, Idaho	75	.4	102	162	36.8	.5	2.3	26.8	10.2	2,607
Boston, Mass.	641	16.3	563	20	-12.2	22.4	6.4	21.6	12.7	11,928
Bridgeport, Conn.	157	18.3	143	110	-8.9	21.0	18.7	27.9	13.4	9,887
Buffalo, N.Y.	463	20.4	358	39	-22.7	26.6	2.7	25.2	15.0	8,561
Cedar Rapids, Iowa	111	1.6	110	141	-.4	2.3	.9	27.6	11.0	2,045
Charlotte, N.C.	241	30.3	314	47	30.2	31.0	1.1	27.8	8.6	2,251
Chattanooga, Tenn.	120	35.8	170	87	41.4	31.7	.8	26.7	12.7	1,370
Chesapeake, Va.	90	23.1	114	137	27.8	27.5	.9	31.9	7.1	936
Chicago, Ill.	3,369	32.7	3,005	2	-10.8	39.8	14.0	28.4	11.4	13,174
Cincinnati, Ohio	454	27.6	385	32	-15.0	33.8	.8	25.2	14.5	4,835
Cleveland, Ohio	751	38.3	574	18	-23.6	43.8	3.1	27.8	13.0	7,264
Colorado Springs, Colo.	136	5.2	215	66	58.8	5.6	8.5	26.3	8.3	2,081
Columbia, S.C.	114	29.9	101	167	-10.9	40.2	2.2	26.3	10.1	846
Columbus, Ga. [4]	155	28.2	169	80	9.3	34.2	2.1	29.3	9.0	919
Columbus, Ohio	540	18.5	565	19	4.6	22.1	.8	25.8	8.9	3,123
Concord, Calif.	85	.3	103	159	21.2	1.7	7.2	27.8	7.3	3,515
Corpus Christi, Tex.	205	5.1	232	80	13.4	5.1	46.8	32.4	8.2	2,237
Dallas, Tex.	844	24.9	904	7	7.1	29.4	12.3	27.0	9.5	2,715
Davenport, Iowa	98	4.2	103	158	4.9	6.1	2.9	29.1	10.7	1,736
Dayton, Ohio	243	30.5	203	70	-16.2	36.9	.9	27.4	11.8	4,202
Denver, Colo.	515	9.1	492	24	-4.3	12.0	18.0	22.5	12.6	4,452
Des Moines, Iowa	201	5.7	191	74	-5.2	6.8	1.8	25.9	12.5	2,890
Detroit, Mich.	1,514	43.7	1,203	8	-20.5	63.1	2.4	30.3	11.7	8,874
Durham, N.C.	95	36.8	101	168	5.7	47.1	.9	23.2	10.1	2,484
Elizabeth, N.J.	113	15.5	106	150	-5.7	18.2	26.7	25.7	13.2	6,000
El Paso, Tex.	322	2.3	425	28	32.0	3.2	62.5	35.0	8.9	1,778
Erie, Pa.	129	6.6	119	130	-7.8	9.7	1.1	27.3	13.4	5,490
Eugene, Oreg.	78	.8	106	151	33.7	1.1	2.1	22.4	9.5	3,250
Evansville, Ind.	139	7.3	130	121	-6.8	8.8	.5	24.6	15.2	3,499
Flint, Mich.	193	28.1	160	85	-17.4	41.4	2.5	31.9	10.0	4,911
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	140	14.6	153	101	9.8	21.0	4.2	19.3	19.1	4,795
Fort Wayne, Ind.	178	10.6	172	80	-3.4	14.6	2.2	28.0	11.9	3,274
Fort Worth, Tex.	393	19.9	385	33	-2.1	22.8	12.6	27.1	11.5	1,804
Fremont, Calif.	101	(z)	132	119	30.8	2.5	14.0	30.1	5.2	1,883
Fresno, Calif.	166	9.6	218	65	31.7	9.5	23.6	27.9	10.9	3,326
Fullerton, Calif.	86	.8	102	163	18.7	1.6	13.5	24.2	8.0	4,620
Garden Grove, Calif.	121	(z)	123	127	1.8	.8	13.5	28.3	7.4	7,046
Garland, Tex.	81	3.7	139	115	70.5	5.3	6.3	33.7	4.1	2,495
Gary, Ind.	175	52.8	152	104	-13.4	70.8	7.1	34.9	8.2	3,857
Glendale, Calif.	133	(z)	139	114	4.8	.3	17.8	20.9	16.3	4,540
Grand Rapids, Mich.	198	11.3	182	75	-8.0	15.7	3.2	27.4	13.4	4,180
Greensboro, N.C.	144	28.2	156	100	8.0	33.0	.8	25.5	9.8	2,581
Hampton, Va.	121	25.4	123	129	1.5	34.3	1.4	29.1	7.0	2,390

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Table 2, continued

CITY	POPULATION										
	1970		1980								
	Total [1] (1,000)	Percent Black [2]	Total (1,000)	Rank	Percent change, 1970–1980	Percent— Black	Spanish origin [3]	Under 18 years old	65 years old and over	Persons per square mile
Hartford, Conn	158	27.9	136	117	−13.7	33.9	20.5	29.0	11.4	7,662
Hialeah, Fla	102	1.1	145	108	41.8	1.5	74.3	24.2	11.4	7,482
Hollywood, Fla	107	3.7	121	129	13.5	4.1	5.3	19.8	25.1	5,249
Honolulu, Hawaii [4]	325	.7	365	38	12.4	1.2	5.2	23.1	10.4	4,196
Houston, Tex	1,234	25.7	1,595	5	29.3	27.6	17.6	28.4	8.9	2,857
Huntington Beach, Calif	116	(z)	171	85	47.0	.7	7.9	27.9	5.9	6,291
Huntsville, Ala	139	12.1	143	111	2.3	20.7	1.0	26.9	7.0	1,256
Independence, Mo	112	.6	112	140	.2	.7	1.4	27.2	10.9	1,388
Indianapolis, Ind	737	18.0	701	12	−4.9	21.8	.9	26.6	10.3	1,990
Irving, Tex	97	1.0	110	142	13.0	1.5	7.4	29.1	4.7	1,835
Jackson, Miss	154	39.7	203	71	31.8	47.0	.7	29.6	8.7	1,910
Jacksonville, Fla	504	22.0	541	22	7.9	25.4	1.9	29.9	9.0	712
Jersey City, N.J	260	21.0	224	61	−14.1	27.7	18.6	29.4	11.8	16,934
Kansas City, Kans	168	20.4	161	93	−4.2	25.3	4.9	29.8	11.7	1,499
Kansas City, Mo	507	22.1	448	27	−11.7	27.4	3.3	26.5	12.3	1,417
Knoxville, Tenn	175	12.7	175	77	.3	14.8	.7	21.9	13.8	2,270
Lakewood, Colo	93	.1	113	138	21.7	.5	5.9	27.6	7.2	3,174
Lansing, Mich	131	9.3	130	122	−.8	13.9	6.3	29.2	8.7	3,984
Las Vegas, Nev	126	11.2	165	89	30.9	12.8	7.8	27.9	8.3	2,994
Lexington-Fayette, Ky	108	17.0	204	66	88.6	19.0	.7	25.0	9.0	719
Lincoln, Nebr	150	1.5	172	81	15.0	2.0	1.8	23.5	10.3	2,888
Little Rock, Ark	132	25.0	158	96	19.6	32.2	.8	29.0	11.0	1,998
Livonia, Mich	110	(z)	105	153	−4.8	.1	.9	29.4	7.6	3,018
Long Beach, Calif	359	5.3	361	37	.7	11.3	14.0	22.9	14.0	7,256
Los Angeles, Calif	2,812	17.9	2,967	3	5.5	17.0	27.5	25.1	10.6	6,384
Louisville, Ky	362	23.8	298	49	−17.5	28.2	.7	25.0	15.3	4,974
Lubbock, Tex	149	7.3	174	79	16.7	8.2	16.8	27.7	7.8	1,920
Macon, Ga	122	37.3	117	134	−4.5	44.5	.7	28.7	11.9	2,357
Madison, Wis	172	1.5	171	84	−.7	2.7	1.3	20.5	8.7	3,165
Memphis, Tenn	624	38.9	646	14	3.6	47.6	.8	29.1	10.4	2,447
Mesa, Ariz	63	1.2	152	102	141.8	1.2	9.1	30.1	11.2	2,250
Miami, Fla	335	22.7	347	41	3.8	25.1	55.9	21.4	17.0	10,113
Milwaukee, Wis	717	14.7	636	18	−11.3	23.1	4.1	27.0	12.5	6,841
Minneapolis, Minn	434	4.4	371	34	−14.6	7.7	1.2	20.0	15.4	6,732
Mobile, Ala	190	35.4	200	72	5.5	36.2	1.1	29.0	11.1	1,830
Modesto, Calif	62	1.9	107	149	72.7	2.1	10.5	29.5	9.7	4,281
Montgomery, Ala	133	33.4	178	78	33.3	39.2	.9	30.2	10.1	1,386
Nashville-Davidson, Tenn	426	19.6	456	23	7.0	23.0	.9	25.0	11.0	959
New Haven, Conn	138	26.3	126	125	−8.4	31.9	8.0	25.3	13.1	6,672
New Orleans, La	593	45.0	558	21	−6.1	55.3	3.4	28.8	11.7	2,786
New York, N.Y	7,896	21.1	7,072	1	−10.4	25.2	19.9	25.0	13.5	23,455
Bronx Borough	1,472	24.3	1,169	(x)	−20.6	31.8	33.9	29.2	12.9	28,006
Brooklyn Borough	2,602	25.2	2,231	(x)	−14.3	32.4	17.6	26.3	12.5	31,762
Manhattan Borough	1,539	24.7	1,429	(x)	−7.2	21.7	23.5	17.7	14.3	64,395
Queens Borough	1,987	13.0	1,891	(x)	−4.8	18.7	13.9	23.1	14.9	17,411
Staten Island Borough	295	8.3	352	(x)	19.2	7.3	5.4	29.1	10.0	5,995
Newark, N.J	382	54.2	329	46	−13.8	58.2	18.6	34.1	8.8	13,862
Newport News, Va	138	28.4	145	109	4.9	31.5	1.8	28.4	7.8	2,219
Norfolk, Va	308	29.3	267	55	−13.3	35.2	2.3	24.8	9.2	5,037
Oakland, Calif	362	34.5	339	43	−6.1	46.9	9.8	24.3	13.2	6,296
Oklahoma City, Okla	366	13.7	403	31	9.9	14.6	3.5	27.0	11.0	648
Omaha, Nebr	347	9.9	314	48	−9.4	12.0	2.3	27.5	12.2	3,457
Orlando, Fla	99	29.5	128	124	29.6	30.0	3.9	24.0	12.7	3,248
Oxnard, Calif	71	6.0	108	145	51.8	8.1	44.4	33.2	6.8	4,508
Pasadena, Calif	113	18.1	119	131	5.0	20.7	18.4	23.1	14.9	5,154
Pasadena, Tex	90	.5	113	139	25.1	.8	17.0	31.4	4.8	2,974
Paterson, N.J	145	26.9	138	118	−4.7	34.1	29.7	32.9	10.3	16,823
Peoria, Ill	127	11.5	124	126	−2.2	18.7	1.4	27.6	12.3	3,029
Philadelphia, Pa	1,949	33.6	1,688	4	−13.4	37.8	3.8	25.9	14.1	12,413
Phoenix, Ariz	584	4.8	790	9	35.2	4.8	14.8	29.0	8.3	2,437
Pittsburgh, Pa	520	20.2	424	30	−18.5	24.0	.8	21.4	18.0	7,652
Portland, Oreg	380	5.6	366	35	−3.8	7.8	2.1	21.8	15.3	3,547
Portsmouth, Va	111	39.9	105	154	−5.8	45.1	1.0	28.7	10.7	3,498

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Table 2, continued

CITY	POPULATION									
	1979		1980							
						Percent—				
	Total[1] (1,000)	Percent Black[2]	Total (1,000)	Rank	Percent change, 1970-1980	Black	Spanish origin[3]	Under 18 years old	65 years old and over	Per square mile
Providence, R.I.	179	8.9	157	99	-12.5	11.8	5.8	23.2	15.3	8,297
Pueblo, Colo.	98	2.1	102	185	4.0	2.1	35.9	28.5	12.3	3,063
Raleigh, N.C.	123	22.7	150	105	22.3	27.4	.9	22.3	8.3	2,793
Reno, Nev.	73	3.2	101	189	38.3	2.7	5.1	20.1	10.5	3,250
Richmond, Va.	249	42.0	219	64	-12.1	51.3	1.0	22.4	14.1	3,850
Riverside, Calif.	140	5.2	171	83	22.0	6.8	18.2	29.2	6.8	2,360
Roanoke, Va.	82	18.3	100	170	8.8	22.0	.7	24.4	15.6	2,326
Rochester, N.Y.	295	16.9	242	57	-18.1	25.8	5.4	28.6	14.0	7,088
Rockford, Ill.	147	8.3	140	113	-5.2	13.2	2.0	27.8	12.6	2,801
Sacramento, Calif.	257	16.7	276	52	7.2	13.4	14.2	24.8	13.6	2,838
St. Louis, Mo.	622	40.9	453	26	-27.2	45.6	1.2	26.1	17.6	7,379
St. Paul, Minn.	310	3.5	270	54	-12.8	4.9	2.9	24.1	15.0	6,157
St. Petersburg, Fla.	216	14.8	239	68	10.4	17.2	1.8	20.4	25.8	4,300
Salt Lake City, Utah	176	1.2	163	90	-7.3	1.5	7.6	24.2	14.7	2,166
San Antonio, Tex.	854	7.6	786	11	20.1	7.3	53.7	32.2	8.8	2,992
San Bernardino, Calif.	107	14.0	117	133	9.9	14.9	25.4	28.1	11.9	2,208
San Diego, Calif.	887	7.8	876	8	25.5	8.9	14.9	24.1	9.7	2,736
San Francisco, Calif.	716	13.4	679	13	-5.1	12.7	12.3	17.2	15.4	14,626
San Jose, Calif.	460	2.5	629	17	36.9	4.6	22.3	31.0	6.2	3,964
Santa Ana, Calif.	156	4.3	204	89	30.8	4.0	44.5	30.6	7.4	7,435
Savannah, Ga.	118	44.9	141	112	19.5	49.0	1.3	29.6	11.4	2,489
Seattle, Wash.	531	7.1	494	23	-7.0	8.5	2.6	17.6	15.4	5,415
Shreveport, La.	182	34.1	206	67	13.0	41.1	1.3	30.3	11.7	2,344
South Bend, Ind.	126	14.1	110	143	-12.6	18.3	2.4	26.8	14.8	3,014
Spokane, Wash.	171	1.3	171	82	.5	1.8	1.5	24.5	15.3	3,313
Springfield, Mass.	164	12.6	152	103	-7.1	18.8	9.1	27.5	13.8	4,805
Springfield, Mo.	120	2.0	133	118	10.8	2.1	.7	23.2	13.2	2,051
Stamford, Conn.	109	12.3	102	161	-5.8	15.0	5.6	24.5	12.0	2,689
Sterling Heights, Mich.	61	.1	109	144	77.6	.2	.9	34.5	4.5	2,978
Stockton, Calif.	110	11.0	150	106	36.2	10.4	22.1	29.2	11.0	3,744
Sunnyvale, Calif.	96	.8	107	148	11.1	2.4	11.5	23.0	8.2	4,850
Syracuse, N.Y.	197	10.6	170	86	-13.8	15.7	1.7	23.3	14.6	7,147
Tacoma, Wash.	154	6.8	159	97	2.7	9.2	2.4	26.8	13.5	3,323
Tampa, Fla.	278	19.7	272	53	-2.2	23.5	13.3	25.1	14.8	3,217
Tempe, Ariz.	84	.7	107	147	88.0	1.8	8.2	24.7	4.7	2,822
Toledo, Ohio	383	13.8	355	40	-7.4	17.4	3.0	28.1	12.5	4,212
Topeka, Kans.	125	8.4	115	136	-7.8	8.5	4.6	25.2	13.9	2,333
Torrance, Calif.	135	(z)	130	123	-3.8	.7	8.3	23.8	8.5	6,341
Tucson, Ariz.	263	3.5	331	43	25.7	3.7	24.9	25.5	11.7	3,346
Tulsa, Okla.	330	10.6	361	38	9.3	11.8	1.7	25.8	10.8	1,845
Virginia Beach, Va.	172	9.1	262	56	52.3	10.0	2.0	30.7	4.5	1,025
Waco, Tex.	95	19.9	101	186	6.2	21.8	11.1	24.3	14.3	1,367
Warren, Mich.	179	(z)	161	92	-10.1	.2	.9	27.8	8.0	4,880
Washington, D.C.	757	71.1	638	15	-15.6	70.3	2.8	22.5	11.8	10,181
Waterbury, Conn.	108	10.1	103	157	-4.4	11.8	6.7	25.8	15.5	3,611
Wichita, Kans.	277	9.7	279	51	1.0	10.8	3.5	26.3	10.6	2,754
Winston-Salem, N.C.	134	34.3	132	120	-1.3	40.2	.8	25.3	12.1	2,189
Worcester, Mass.	177	1.8	162	91	-8.4	2.9	4.3	23.6	16.3	4,326
Yonkers, N.Y.	204	8.4	195	73	-4.4	10.5	8.7	23.1	14.8	10,855
Youngstown, Ohio	141	25.2	115	135	-18.1	33.3	3.3	26.3	14.6	3,346

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1970, vol. 1, parts A and B; and 1980 Census of Population, vol. 1, parts A and B, pp 22-24.

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native-English-speaking; stable majority; high-turnover black; and high-turnover non-native-English-speaking). Because of the uncertainty in identifying eligible high schools in all of these types of communities, the hope was simply that three or four of these types could be covered.

Intensive and Non-Intensive Sites. Any study, covering the scope of issues described to this point, faces the stereotypic dilemma of allocating resources to a small number of intensive case studies versus extending these resources to a larger number of sites to be covered more superficially. This tradeoff is created by the complexity of events within a single site, and the fact that a wide variety of information may be relevant at any given site.

In the **District/Secondary School Study**, an attempt was made to mediate this tradeoff by having both types of sites, which were in turn labeled Intensive Sites and Non-Intensive Sites. Intensive Sites were deemed the subject of case studies--calling for interviews, direct observations, and analysis of records and documents (e.g., see Yin, 1984). Such use of multiple sources of evidence allowed the investigators to pursue a corroboratory path, in which the details of school performance or operation were based on the convergence of information from several sources, and not just a single one. To conserve resources, four such Intensive Sites were to be selected, with each one having two waves of data collection over two academic years.

Because only four such sites could be accommodated, the research design called for all of these sites to have achieved exemplary levels of school performance. Sites were to be screened so that, before a final selection was made, an eligible Intensive Site had to:

- Be ranked in the top 25 percent, compared to the median of scholastic attainment and attendance, in the entire pool of Ford Foundation schools;
- Be recognized by the local community as an exemplary school, as reflected for instance by coverage in the mass media; and

- Show evidence of sustained exemplary performance over a period of at least three years.

In other words, the Intensive Sites were to be selected on the basis of known outcomes on the key dependent variables, and the desired outcomes were all exemplary. Such site selection criteria would assure that the investigators at an Intensive Site could pursue all facets of the conditions predicted from school effectiveness or organizational excellence theories, with the design logic across these sites being to replicate the same findings four times (see Yin, 1984, for more information on cross-case, replication designs).

In contrast, the Non-Intensive Sites were deemed to be the subject of data collection by face-to-face interview only, and only with a few key officials. Readily available school records also were to be collected, mainly to assess the school performance variables, but no attempt was made to establish a convergence of evidence, and the scope of inquiry was narrower than at the Intensive Sites. Given the available resources, 40 such Non-Intensive sites were incorporated into the final study, and these were further divided into two types:

- Non-Intensive Site Type A was to be a pool of four pairs of sites (N=8). Each pair was to contain schools in the same district, one of which was known to have achieved exemplary performance and the other of which was known to have produced only minimal performance; and

- Non-Intensive Site Type B was to be a set of schools (N=32), selected through a cluster sampling method and whose performance levels were therefore not known beforehand, but which represented the original pool of eligible sites in the 166 cities. (In this pool, any given school district could have up to two such sites.)

In sum, the rationale underlying the identification of Intensive Sites and Non-Intensive Sites was to allow for full proposition testing (the

four Intensive Sites and the eight, Type A Non-Intensive Sites) as well as for some assessment of the prevalence or frequency of the pertinent school outcomes and school operations (the thirty-two, Type B Non-Intensive Sites).

The site selection process therefore required four levels of detail. First, all sites had to be screened to determine whether they were comprehensive high schools and did not use selection criteria (e.g., exams) for admissions, and whether they had minority and low-income enrollments of over thirty percent each. This was the basic definition of an eligible site. Second, school performance information was also needed to select the four Intensive Sites and the eight, Type A Non-Intensive Sites. Third, geographic, but not performance information was used to select the Type B, Non-Intensive Sites (for budgetary reasons, all such sites were to be clustered in the cities--within 200 miles--of one of the Intensive Sites or Type A Non-Intensive Sites). Last, all sites were stratified according to city size, to ensure coverage of this key contextual variable.

Three sources of information on urban high schools were used in the screening and selection process: 1) nominations of exemplary schools by educators and research investigators; 2) review of the schools in the Ford Foundation School Recognition Program; and 3) direct contacts with research directors in urban districts. In total 443 schools were screened for their performance characteristics, and 44 were deemed eligible to be selected as an Intensive Site or a Type A Non-Intensive Site.

Table 3 summarizes the number and types of sites, also indicating the time interval for data collection, given the fact that the **District/Secondary School Study** extends over a three-year period. Table 4 then lists the 24 city locations for the 44 study sites.

Table 3

NUMBER AND TYPES OF SITES
IN DISTRICT/SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDY

Time Interval for Data Collection	Type of Site		
	Intensive	Non-Intensive	
		Type A	Type B
Spring-Fall, 1984	2	-	20
Spring-Fall, 1985	2	4	12
Spring, 1986	-	4	-
Total	4	8	32

Table 4

CITY LOCATIONS OF SELECTED SITES,*
BY REGION AND CITY SIZE

City Population (000's)	Region of Country					
	Northeast	Southeast	Midwest	Southwest	West	Total
100-199	Hartford	Portsmouth Macon	Kansas City, KS			4
200-499	Newark	Atlanta Norfolk Richmond	Omaha St. Louis	Albuquerque Fort Worth	Fresno	9
500-999	Baltimore		Indianapolis Milwaukee	Dallas San Antonio	Denver San Francisco	8
1,000 +	New York City		Detroit		Los Angeles	3
Total	5	5	6	4	4	24

*Tentative, pending final contact with sites.

D. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

The data collection for the **District/Secondary School Study** was still underway at the time this paper was written. However, some preliminary results, from two of the Intensive Sites, are worth noting. (Intensive Site No. 1 was located in the Southeast and reflected the stable, black category among our community types; Intensive Site No. 2 was located in the Southwest and reflected the stable, non-native-English-speaking category among our community types.)

To cover these preliminary results, this section of the paper first reviews the school performance levels found at each site. Second, the discussion turns to the implications for the two theories, in light of information collected about school operations at these two sites. Third, insights into a District/School model of co-managing exemplary urban high schools as part of a partnership--different from either of the two theories originally being tested--are proposed in a speculative manner.

School Performance Outcomes

The data for the first two intensive sites showed that, although the two sites had been selected for their exemplary performance on two key outcomes (scholastic attainment and student attendance), neither site was entirely exemplary on all outcomes. Such a situation is to be expected, given the limited nature of the prior site screening that was possible, as well as the fact that no single school may indeed be exemplary, simultaneously, on all outcomes.

The performance of the two intensive sites may be summarized as follows (see Table 5):

- On scholastic achievement, both schools were better than the district average for a three-year period, with Site No. 2 ten percent higher than its district average;
- On attendance, Site No. 1 was below 90 percent, and not different from the district average; Site No. 2 was above 90 percent but also not

Table 5

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE OUTCOME
FROM SITE NO. 1 AND SITE NO. 2

(All outcomes represented in percentages)

Outcome	Site 1						Site 2					
	School			District			School			District		
	'82	'83	'84	'82	'83	'84	'82	'83	'84	'82	'83	'84
Achievement Test -11th Grade (Composite Percentile)	55	56	64	51	50	58	53	55	53	43	41	44
Average Daily Attendance	86	86	88	n/a	n/a	86	92	93	93	92	92	92
Dropout Rate (Annual)	16	14	13	14	15	11	16	8	10	11	11	11
Postsecondary Placement	n/a	75	73	n/a	69	63	n/a	60	60	n/a	48	50
Vocational Enrollment (% of Seniors)	n/a	74	77	n/a	72	63	24	22	21	34	34	34
Minimum Competency Performance (% Passing Competency Test)	99	98	98	95	96	98	76	77	74	61	70	65
Suspensions/ Expulsions (Annual)	n/a	30	n/a	n/a	54	n/a	3	3	3	n/a	n/a	3

different from its district average;

- On dropout rate, both schools were roughly the same as their district averages;
- On continuation in education, both schools had a higher percentage of graduates attending a 2- or 4-year college than the district averages;
- On employment, students in Site No. 1 were enrolled in higher proportions for vocational programs and career classes, in comparison to district norms; but students at Site No. 2 were enrolled in lower proportions than the district-wide average;
- On social functioning, Site No. 1 was not substantially different from its district average; but Site No. 2 had a higher number of students passing some type of competency test than its district-wide norms; and
- On suspensions and expulsions, Site No. 1 was disproportionately lower than the rest of the district; the rate for Site No. 2 was the same as its district average;

As this list suggests, neither school could be ranked at the extreme of truly excellent outcomes, even though both schools had achieved high levels of performance. At the same time, because data were examined for a three-year period, the schools were beyond the "improving" category and had exhibited sustained performance over a period of time.

The nonexemplary nature of the performance could be couched in two terms: first, in comparison to their suburban counterparts, urban high schools with comprehensive programs and no admissions requirements do operate at a lower level of performance; and second, in comparison to their own district averages, the two intensive sites were not the best-performing sites on all seven outcome variables. Nevertheless, these were the best schools within each of the urban systems that also met the earlier criteria for selecting sites: the presence of at least 30 percent minority and low-income students, the absence of an admissions requirement, and the offering of a comprehensive and not specialized curriculum.

School Operations

Implications for the Two Theories. Given these caveats about the less than exemplary nature of the performance outcomes, the site-specific studies nevertheless reflected revealing results with regard to the two theories.

As for excellence theory, many of the propositions were substantiated, including the following:

- At both sites, the principal creates "productivity through people"--in Site No. 1 by encouraging interdepartmental interaction and teacher innovation, and in Site No. 2 by giving teachers a high degree of autonomy within their classrooms;
- At both sites, the schools have "simultaneous loose-tight management," such as centralized control of budget and staffing decisions but departmental autonomy with curriculum decisions; and
- At both sites, the principals are "value driven" by a set of annual performance goals for the schools.

However, at least four propositions from excellence theory were not substantiated, as follows:

- At Site No. 1, there were few required courses for graduation, and hence little "sticking to the knitting;"
- At Site No. 2, the principal did not show a "bias for action," as he neither left his office to an extraordinary degree nor interacted frequently with the school staff;
- At both sites, the organizational structure of the school--with assistant principals and department heads--was not "flat," but, like most schools, verged on the type of matrix organization considered by Peters and Waterman (1982) to be a negative pattern; and

- At neither site did students (or parents)--as the "clients" of the school--draw the predicted attention implied by "being close to the customer;" rather, significant decisions about a school's curriculum and offerings were made in the absence of any attempt to derive feedback from the clientele being served.

As for school effectiveness theory, the following pattern of results could be observed, in a preliminary fashion, after the first two Intensive Site visits. To begin with, most of the results did support the propositions made by the theory, with the following illustrative findings:

- Both sites had a clear and operational "system for assessing student progress" against annual performance objectives by subject area;
- Both sites had given priority to the maximization of "academic learning time;" for instance, Site No. 1 rarely used the public address system for announcements;
- Both sites emphasized teacher control over the curriculum and over classroom activities, thus promoting "teacher efficacy;" and
- Both sites had a "safe, orderly climate," with a positive school environment.

However, as with excellence theory, certain key propositions from school effectiveness theory were nevertheless not substantiated:

- Neither of the intensive sites had consistency among staff in having "high expectations" for all students;
- Site No. 1 had no clear consensus on schoolwide academic or behavioral goals," and no direct evidence of community support more broadly; and
- Site No. 2 did not have a principal who led curriculum or teaching improvements, and who could not be considered an "instructional leader" (nor

did he see his role as such).

In summary, although these two theories can be expressed as a series of discrete propositions, the research design did not follow a "factors" approach. Rather, the true test of each theory, as indicated by Peters and Waterman themselves, is that all components stipulated to be present must be present; similarly, all components stipulated to be absent must be absent, in order for the original theory to be verified. In this sense, neither of the two theories provided a compelling explanation of how either effectiveness or excellence is produced at these first two intensive sites.

District Co-Management of Schools. Instead of some of the predicted conditions, the data collected at the first two sites suggested some important aspects of school management, overlooked by both theories. In general, these had to do with the ways in which school districts have now begun to manage school operations, through such actions as:

- Appointing the school principal and assigning school staff: these school resources are directly affected by district practices, and at Site No. 2 the principal did not even interview all new members of the teaching staff before such staff were assigned to the school;

- Conducting direct teacher evaluation: at Site No. 1, district staff sat in classrooms to observe teachers and to assist the school evaluator in conducting the cyclic teacher evaluations;

- Influencing student intake and promotion: districts directly affect student intake through the setting of school boundaries; at Site No. 1, the district also established specific criteria for promotion from the ninth to tenth grades, with the result being a disproportionate number of ninth-graders being held back year after year;

- Guiding the development of a school "tradition:" districts play a key role in making such decisions as selecting the type of school building to be constructed and the favoring of certain curriculum (or extra-curricular) topics for a particular school; and

- Providing operational guidance for co-managing a school: districts can issue specific procedures to be followed in managing a school; at Site No. 2, such procedures gave the principal a workable set of rules that were therefore implemented.

A major upshot of these preliminary findings was the development of a much stronger understanding of the ways in which districts also help to manage schools. These are not simply the commonly cited district-wide policies, in which district-wide tests or teacher evaluations are mandated for all schools. Rather, these are policies whereby districts tailor the availability of resources or the implementation of specific procedures to the needs of a specific school. In this sense, the district is not just the context for school operations, nor is it running every school in an indiscriminate and uniform manner. Instead, the district and school administrators may be seen as joined in a partnership in co-managing a school.

This insight has represented a major shift in the **District/-Secondary School Study.** To examine the issue further, the study design has now been modified, to focus deliberately on the interactions, or "chemistry" that may have to occur between different styles of district management and of school management. Thus, Figure 4 shows a matrix with several cells. It may very well be that effectiveness or excellence can be produced from several of these cells, as long as the postures taken by the district and school administrators match each others' needs. For instance, where the district or superintendent has taken a directive posture, the ideal principal may be one that facilitates or implements policy, rather than one who is an innovator or initiator of new practices.

Departmental Management of Schools. Parallel findings also may

Figure 4

POTENTIAL SUPERINTENDENT AND PRINCIPAL ROLES
IN CO-MANAGEMENT OF AN URBAN SECONDARY SCHOOL

PRINCIPAL (School) \ SUPERINTENDENT (District)	Directive	Facilitative	Passive/Uninvolved
Directive			
Facilitative			
Passive/ Uninvolved			

emerge with regard to the role of departments within urban high schools. Site No. 2 showed especially strong departmental effects, with two departments (science and English) moving in the direction of effectiveness or excellence practice, but this having little to do with the management of the school's other departments. Departmental practices therefore represented another source of desired managerial performance in affecting a school's operations, and these practices also are being examined further in the subsequent data collection for the **District/Secondary School Study.**

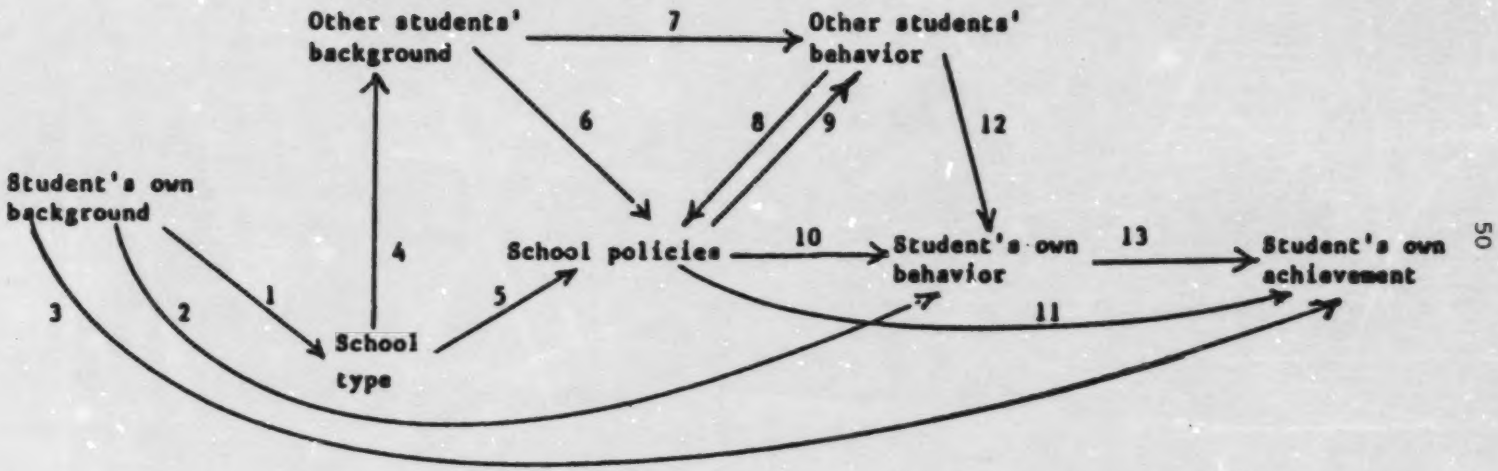
Summary. The findings on school operations at the first two Intensive Sites showed significant deviation from the propositions from effectiveness or excellence theories, as total managerial patterns. In contrast, district management of school operations appeared stronger and more important than recognized by either of the two theories, and this facet is to be examined more closely in further data collection. Similarly, the role of departments also will be the subject of closer scrutiny.

A tentative summary statement would be twofold. First, the **District/Secondary School Study** is finding schools to be much more amenable to management initiatives than originally thought, especially as suggested by Coleman et al. (1982). These investigators developed a causal model in which certain variables--e.g., student composition and turnover--were deemed beyond the manipulability of district or school administrators (see causal paths 2 and 3, Figure 5). Yet, our first two cases have suggested several ways in which such conditions--as well as more global conditions such as a school's "tradition"--can indeed be manipulated by managers. Thus, a different characterization of the production of school outcomes, based on the preliminary findings from the **District/Secondary School Study**, is shown in Figure 6. (Note in this figure that district policies are considered as antecedents to student composition and enrollment, in comparison to the causal paths in Figure 5.)

Second, the study is finding that the sources of managerial initiatives are much more diverse and complex than the single

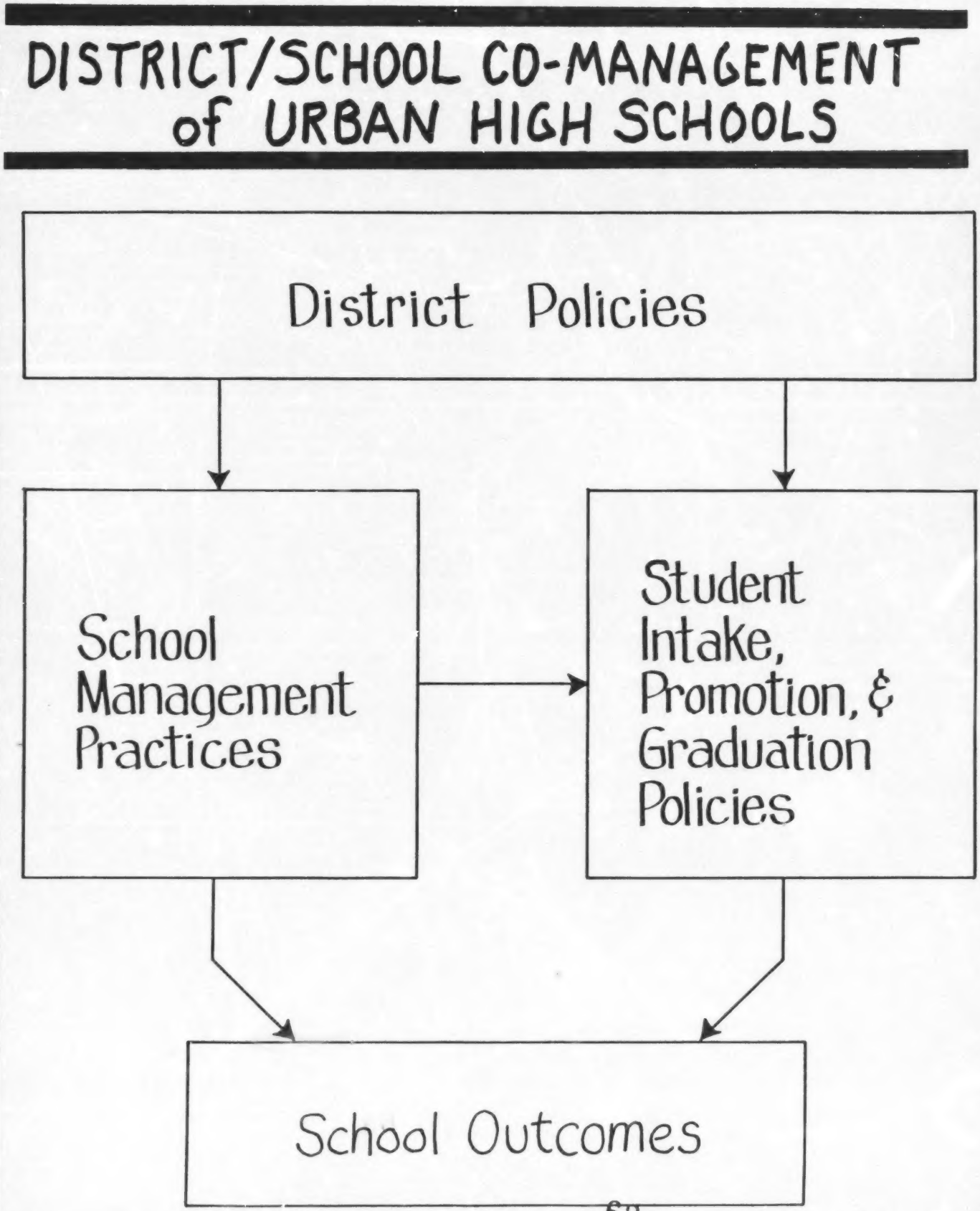
Figure 5

GENERAL MODEL OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT



Source: Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore, 1981.

Figure 6


DISTRICT/SCHOOL CO-MANAGEMENT
of URBAN HIGH SCHOOLS
District Policies
School Management Practices
Student Intake, Promotion, & Graduation Policies
School Outcomes

organization implicit to school effectiveness or managerial excellence theory. Both theories lean heavily toward considering the school (or firm) alone as the sole source of managerial control over the school (or firm). In contrast, the preliminary findings from the **District/-Secondary School Study** suggest that the role of districts and departments also must be examined carefully, even in understanding the management of a specific high school. Thus far, the degree of collaboration has suggested a pattern in which schools and districts act to "co-manage" the school in specific ways that produce desirable school outcomes.

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